

MANITOWOC COUNTY HARLEY OWNERS GROUP

GROUP RIDERS PROTOCOL

Each spring when the riding season begins, the opportunities for free weekends and vacation times for riding seem endless. It is our assumption that all members are aware of group riding practices and procedures. This situation makes each ride we do very important, and that's the reason for these guidelines. It is probably far more likely that everyone will enjoy many rewarding and safe riding experiences.

1. It is a good idea to arrive at the assembly point with a fully fueled bike, and an empty bladder. A motorcycle in proper running condition. Proper riding attire for all weather conditions. (i.e. rain suit, helmet, gloves, chaps, etc....)
2. The first and last positions in any ride should be occupied by a Road Captain. Road Captains will be identified by **Orange Armbands** worn on their left arms. If these individuals are not available, the senior Chapter officer present may designate riders to act in these positions for the ride. Individuals may also volunteer to be a Road Captain for a particular ride which they are leading.
3. **No one** passes the Lead Road Captain, except in situations designated by the Lead Road Captain.
4. Before departing, the Lead Road Captain will announce the riding formation, route, destination, length and time of ride, and rest or gas stops. When possible, gas and rest stops will be on the right side of the road.
5. If you will be leaving a ride prior to its return, let a Road Captain know prior to starting.
6. When merging on to the Interstate system, the Lead Road Captain will maintain a speed of approximately 50 MPH until all riders are caught up and a tight formation is attained. When on country roads, the group will pause briefly at Stop signs to insure all group members are present.
7. A staggered file formation has been adopted as the standard group riding formation for the Chapter. In practice, the staggered file appears as illustrated

X

X

X

X

8. The staggered file is maintained on road trips to the extent possible. Some exceptions, when the group assumes a single-file profile, include
 - a. when avoiding road hazards (potholes, sand, gravel, road kill, etc.)
 - b. when cornering (depending on speed, sharpness of the curve)
 - c. usually when passing
9. There is a tendency when riding in a group to experience the "Rubber Band Effect" which, at it's worst, is the almost constant speeding up and slowing down necessary to maintain the proper formation spacing. This situation can be minimized if the following points are observed:
 - a. change speed **gradually**
 - b. look ahead, pay attention, and be aware of changing road conditions/terrain, and try to anticipate upcoming road speed changes and begin to initiate them
 - c. do not attempt to maintain the "one second between bikes" rule on curvy roads or when it would require acceleration.
10. For less experienced riders, it is recommended to ride near the front of the column. All sidecars and bikes with trailers should ride at the rear of the column.
11. If you have a strong preference for either riding position, centerline or shoulder, talk to the Lead Road Captain or position yourself there.
12. This Chapter obeys all traffic laws. On occasion the Road Captains may block a stop sign regulated intersection, however, **THIS CHAPTER WILL NOT BLOCK TRAFFIC LIGHT CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS. WE WILL NOT RUN RED LIGHTS.**

13. If you are uncomfortable with the road speed of the group, it would be a good idea to speak to the Road Captain.
14. The length of the ride between breaks is generally determined by weather, fuel needs, and the preferences of the Road Captain. It is usually the case that a break is called approximately every hour, or somewhere between 50 and 60 miles.
15. It is not necessary to maintain your exact position in the file when resuming the ride following a break. However take a look around so you know who is immediately behind. You need to keep an eye on that bike, and signal ahead by flashing your bright lights or by overtaking the leader, if you notice the person behind you has pulled off. Riders with mechanical or other difficulty will be assisted by the group so they can continue. If this is not possible, arrangements to retrieve the bike will be made and riders may double up to transport the member(s) then without a bike.
16. Road hazards are identified first by the Road Captain by pointing and usually, slowing down. The pointing should continue back through the file. See additional hand signals at the bottom of this page.
17. Manitowoc County HOG is a rather friendly organization, and therefore many individuals wave at other riders on the highway. This is one of those optional things; join in if you feel so inclined.
18. Manitowoc County HOG acknowledges the position of the National HOG Organization and the American Motorcyclist Association regarding the wearing of helmets and other safety equipment and clothing. Manitowoc County HOG is strongly committed to the position that on matters related to personal safety, it is the rider who should decide what will be worn and when.
19. The consumption of alcoholic beverages when breaks are taken at beverage-serving establishments is left to the responsible discretion of the individual.
20. Ride Safe. Ride Long. Have Fun.



